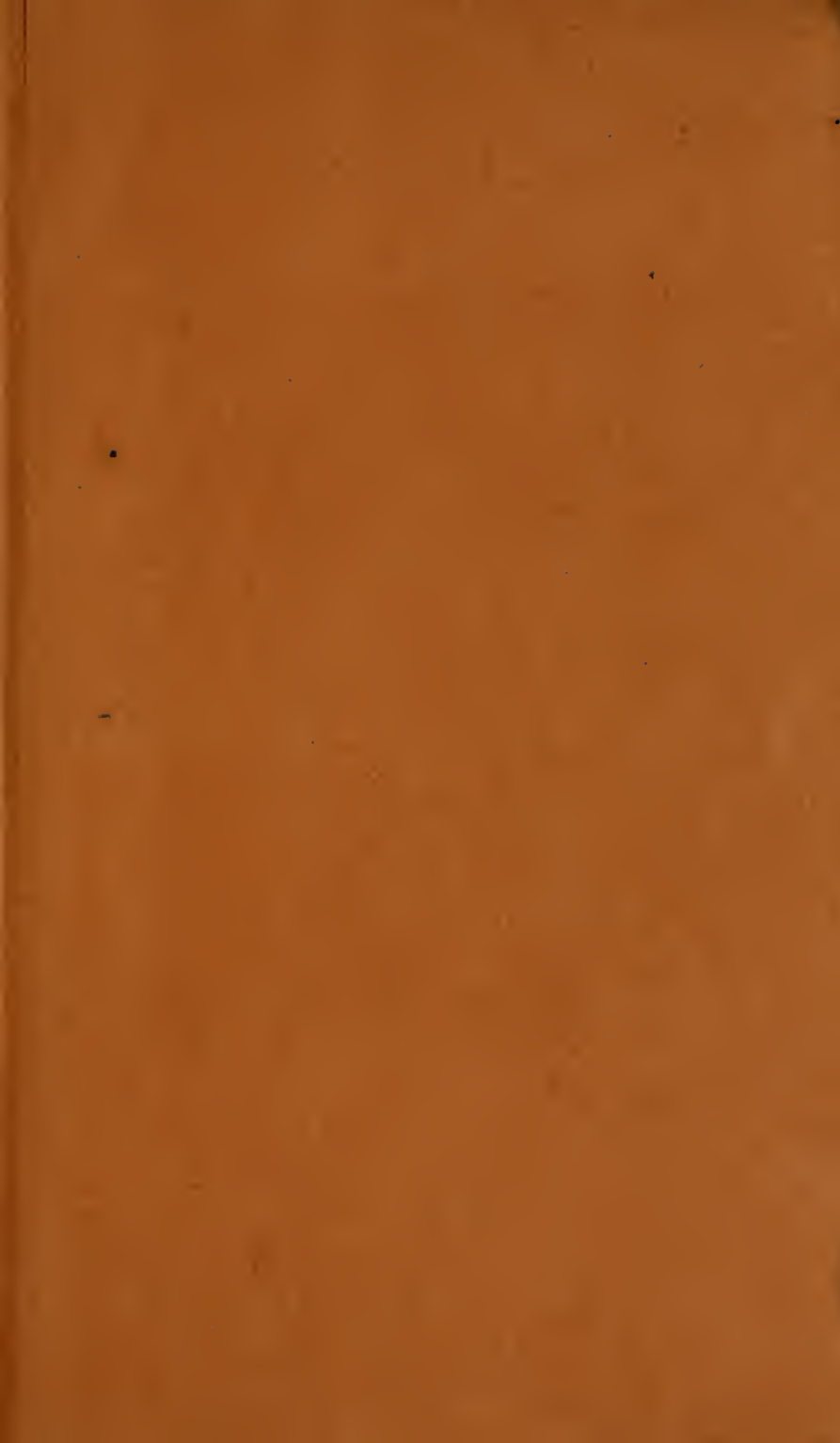






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# TWO SERMONS

PREACHED IN

Charterhouse Chapel,

BY

THE REV. GEORGE CURREY, B.D.

PREACHER AT THE CHARTERHOUSE.

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“ The memory of the just is blessed.”  
PROV. X. 7.

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To the Memory  
OF  
TWO DEARLY LOVED FRIENDS  
THESE SERMONS  
ARE DEDICATED.





THE Scholars of Charterhouse School in their desire to express affectionate reverence for the memory of Dr. Elder, have asked me to print the Sermon preached in this Chapel on Sunday last.

I have added to it a Sermon preached three years ago, making mention of another friend closely connected with Dr. Elder in his life, and taken from us, like him, by an early death.

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The Rev. EDWARD ELDER, D.D., was elected Head Master of Charterhouse School in May, 1853. He died on April 6th (Easter Tuesday), 1858.

The Rev. OLIVER WALFORD, M.A., was Usher of Charterhouse School. He died on April 3rd, and was buried April 10th (Easter Tuesday), 1855.

Charterhouse, April 12th, 1858.



# SERMON I.

[Preached on the First Sunday after Easter.]

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## THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION.

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1 PET. i. 3.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

WHEN St. Paul stood before the Jewish Council he caused great dissension among the members present by crying aloud, “Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question<sup>1</sup>.” This was no mere random assertion made for the purpose of dividing the Council. It was the very sign of an apostle to be the witness of the Lord’s resurrection. So when St. Matthias was appointed to supply the place of Judas Iscariot, St. Peter said that “one must be ordained to be a witness with us of the resurrection<sup>2</sup>.” The same Apostle in his ser-

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxiii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Acts i. 22.

mon on the day of Pentecost, made this the main topic of his discourse, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses<sup>3</sup>." So too at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, "Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you<sup>4</sup>." Again, before Annas and Caiaphas, "Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them . . . Be it known unto all, that in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you this day whole<sup>5</sup>:" and when preaching to Cornelius and his household, "Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before of God<sup>6</sup>." Nor was this theme new to St. Paul himself. In his first missionary tour he addressed to the men of Antioch in Pisidia, a full declaration of this doctrine, quoting, as St. Peter had done before him, the 16th Psalm, and saying, "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again<sup>7</sup>." So at Athens, "He preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection<sup>8</sup>:" and afterwards, when he was answering accusations of the Jews from Jerusalem, he told Felix that

<sup>3</sup> Acts ii. 32.

<sup>5</sup> Acts iv. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Acts xiii. 32, 33.

<sup>4</sup> Acts iii. 26.

<sup>6</sup> Acts x. 40, 41.

<sup>8</sup> Acts xvii. 18.

he had "hope toward God . . . that there shall be a resurrection of the dead<sup>9</sup>," and that it was because he had referred to the resurrection he had given so deep offence;—he told Agrippa that he stood and was judged "for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers<sup>1</sup>," he told the Roman Jews that "for the hope of Israel" he was "bound with this chain<sup>2</sup>." So clear is it that the resurrection of the dead was in the Apostles' eyes the fulfilment of the promises, the substance of their hopes, and the foundation of their faith.

This would indeed naturally follow from the fact that He in whose name they were called had risen from the dead; but there was also another reason to be found in the position wherein the Apostles stood, "set forth, as it were appointed to death," "made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men," "troubled on every side," "perplexed," "persecuted," "cast down," and yet "not distressed," "not in despair," "not forsaken," "not destroyed<sup>3</sup>." This was, and could only be, because they knew "that he which raised up the Lord Jesus would raise up them also by Jesus<sup>4</sup>;" and so St. Paul tells us himself, "For which cause" (that is, because they knew of the resurrection) "we faint not; but though our

<sup>9</sup> Acts xxiv. 15.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxvi. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxviii. 20.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 14.

outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal<sup>5</sup>." The close reasoning of St. Paul in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians brings out the arguments with peculiar force: "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins<sup>6</sup>." The argument is against such as pretended to be Christians, while they disbelieved the resurrection of the dead; and the Apostle replies by showing that the resurrection of the dead and the resurrection of the Lord were inseparable, that a risen Lord was the subject-matter of all apostolic preaching; and if that were untrue, the whole edifice of faith, the whole hope of salvation, must fall

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 16—18.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 13—17.



to the ground. And having thus shown that the doctrine of the resurrection was necessarily the keystone of the Christian religion, he proceeds to the other argument derived from the wants and the circumstances of Christ's followers; 1, of those who have already departed this life, "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished<sup>7</sup>;" 2, of those who are still struggling with the world, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. . . . Why stand we in jeopardy every hour? . . . If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not<sup>8</sup>?" Where is our support in trial, where our consolation in sorrow, except in the resurrection of the dead? "I am the Resurrection and the Life<sup>9</sup>." "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept<sup>1</sup>." These are the magic words by which persecution is turned into profit, and sorrow converted into joy. And so St. Peter teaches in my text, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead;" adding, "wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 18.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 19. 30. 32.

<sup>9</sup> John xi. 25.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 20.

faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

Great, indeed, was the value of the hope of the resurrection to such as set their all upon one cast, determined to lose every thing that they might win Christ; contented and called upon to forego all that the world counts dear, to win those joys which should follow the resurrection of the dead. And in all times of sorrow and of suffering the mind recurs naturally to the same topic of consolation. Lately, when a band of soldiers arrived at Cawnpore, burning to avenge the wrongs of their countrymen, their eager haste yet admitted of a brief delay to erect over the remains of the victims of heathen cruelty a simple wooden cross with this inscription: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." A fitting monument, an appropriate inscription, to which our hearts most readily respond, "comforting one another with these words<sup>2</sup>."

But it is not merely in the hour of extraor-

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 18.



dinary trial or unwonted calamity that we need solace from the hope of the resurrection. Let us watch over the death-beds of those who have attained to extreme old age, and have enjoyed for a longer period than usually falls to the lot of man the earthly blessings which life and health supply; and what will be the prevailing thought, but that which the Psalmist expresses: "Though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow, so soon passeth it away, and we are gone<sup>3</sup>." How sad were it then to contemplate the failing powers of body and of mind, were not our hope full of immortality; were we not looking "for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself<sup>4</sup>."

Such will be the thoughts of the Christian whenever death enters his abode, but the more vivid will be the impression when the departed has been called away, not in the decline of age, but in the full vigour of manhood. The impression is most vivid with us now, for the sad event of the last week must surely have struck it deeply upon our hearts. It needs no words of mine to quicken the affectionate sorrow with which the memory of EDWARD ELDER will ever

<sup>3</sup> Ps. xc. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Phil. iii. 21.

be regarded by all here, whether those who knew him as a kind and indulgent master, or those who associated with him as a warm and hearty friend.

I could not leave this mournful subject untouched, nor would you, I am sure, have been satisfied had I done so; and yet I feel it very difficult to express my appreciation of his character in words which may seem either to you or to myself adequate to the occasion. I know how deeply you have all felt your loss; I know how well you loved him; how highly you estimated that frank, joyous, and confiding spirit which seemed till very lately to indicate a vitality, promising a long continuance of his presiding care, to lead and cheer you on in the path of duty and exertion. The mysterious decree has gone forth, his strength has become weakness, and the spirit has returned to the God who gave it. Thanks be to God that this is not all, that our hopes do not end here, that Christ has by rising destroyed death, and won the victory over the grave, "that through the grave and gate of death we may pass to our joyful resurrection."

I do not purpose to enter upon an elaborate description of a character which you all knew and valued. His manly integrity was clear as the day. Earnestness and honesty of purpose were his marked characteristics. Of him it may truly be said, that whatever his

hand found to do he did with his might<sup>5</sup>, and did all with “gladness and singleness of heart<sup>6</sup>.” It was this which was the great element of his success. It was by this that he carried with him the wills and the affections of those who were placed under his care; and this hearty warmth of feeling was evinced in the devoted, I may almost say passionate, attachment to the Charterhouse. The honour and interests of the school were among the last subjects which occupied his thoughts.

In the last lengthened conversation I had with him, not a month before his death, he talked with interest of the welfare and prospects of his pupils, and especially of those who were about to be confirmed; expressing his hope that in their preparation (in which, had he been well, he would have himself taken part) they might be not merely instructed in sound knowledge, but impressed with religious seriousness. May those who have taken part in this solemn rite remember their master’s last wish and prayer in their behalf.

With rare intellectual powers, and with a remarkable facility in communicating the knowledge which he possessed, he combined an energy of disposition peculiarly calculated to make these faculties effective with the young; while the genial kindliness of his manner, and the

<sup>5</sup> Eccl. ix. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Acts ii. 46.

ready confidence which he reposed in those with whom he had to do, won the trust of all, and inclined most to be as frank and open-dealing as himself. Never exacting of boys more than might in reason be expected, ready to make allowance for their faults and follies, sympathizing with the joyousness of youth, and no less willing to forward their amusements than to promote their learning, he showed in every way that his heart was in his work, and that he thus could find pleasure in labours which were necessarily arduous and sometimes harassing. I remember well his Founder's Day Sermon. I remember the first speech with which he greeted his brother Carthusians; how plainly he set forth his own views of the duties of a schoolmaster; how unaffectedly he declared religion to be the groundwork upon which he sought to build; and how the natural earnestness of his manner proved that the words were not words of course, but were the expression of his set purpose and determination, the actuating principle of his life. How well he taught, and how he was rewarded by the honours gained by his pupils, I will not now detail. Let those who would emulate his success, or would crown their master's grave with laurels won in that course for which he was preparing them, endeavour to attain their end by imitating the manly energy with which he brought the powers of his intellect into play, trusting not

so much to quickness of perception or liveliness of imagination (though both were his), as to a vigorous and conscientious exercise of the powers which God had given him. But I could not dwell on his mental qualities with genuine satisfaction, did I not verily believe that his energy and heartiness were built upon the true foundation, that he did all things as unto the Lord, that desirous as he was to see his pupils intellectually distinguished, he desired still more to stamp upon their minds the impress of Christian principle and love, that whatever else might be the distinction of Charterhouse scholars, this at least might be their mark, that they were not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, and not untrained to fight under his banner.

The remembrance of the Christian hopes of our departed friend is our stay now—now that after a comparatively short period of active exertion within these walls he is summoned to his rest. Just three years have passed since he together with us mourned the departure of a friend and fellow-master, who like himself was called away in the prime of manhood. Remarkably congenial in their dispositions and feelings, strikingly resembling each other in many points of their character, these two friends had mutually rejoiced to be, as it seemed, united in their lives. Two years have passed, and one is mourning the premature death of his friend



and associate. How deeply he mourned his intimate friends, and they alone, can tell. His was no ordinary sorrow. Pass three years more, and we who survive have again to bear part in the funeral procession—we have to deplore another loss—how similar to the former! United, though for a brief period, in their lives, in their deaths they are not divided. And as they resembled each other in their end, both called upon a sudden, in the meridian of life, to withdraw from duties they were zealously and effectively performing, so are our sad hearts cheered by the conviction, that they had in very truth, one Lord, one faith, one hope of their calling<sup>7</sup>. For each knew whom he had believed, and was persuaded that He was able to keep that which he had committed unto Him against that day<sup>8</sup>. It is not without purpose to ourselves that these two melancholy events have occurred within so short a space. In each case the premature stroke of death warns us that we also be ready, for at what hour we think not the Son of Man cometh<sup>9</sup>. In each case we are reminded of the vanity of all that is of the earth, and in each case we have all the consolation which religion can afford, telling us that he whom we love is not dead but sleepeth, having been “begotten again unto a lively hope of the resurrection of the dead.” And truly when our eyes turn

<sup>7</sup> Eph. iv. 4.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Tim. i. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Matt. xxiv. 44.

sadly to the widow and the fatherless, when our hearts seem ready to faint within us in considering the mysterious dispensations of Providence, then the trust that we verily shall see the "goodness of the Lord in the land of the living"<sup>1</sup> is a priceless treasure, an inestimable boon.

This is a season of the year calculated above all others to inspire us with such thoughts of comfort. We have accompanied our Lord to Calvary, and been taught to draw precious balm even from his wounded side, because He died for our sins; and this has been but the preparation to that triumphant holiday on which we commemorate Christ's rising from the dead. In a northern country there is a very peculiar custom observed on the morning of Easter Day. Each person as he walks along the streets, in place of using the ordinary salutation, greets his friend with the words "Christ is risen," as if informing him of some great and glorious news. We can imagine how sweetly these words must sound in the ears of some mourner walking abroad in his loneliness. He hears the words "Christ is risen," and although it is in truth no new fact, it comes to him with a new force, speaking of hope, of joy, of comfort, and of life. And so in our Easter festivals, when we read how Christ arose, how He

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxvii. 13.

spake to his sorrowing disciples, "Peace be unto you<sup>2</sup>," may not peace be shed anew in our hearts, and hope spring afresh of joys not belonging to the world?

Sorrow then, my brethren, for one whom you have dearly and justly loved, but "sorrow not as others which have no hope<sup>3</sup>." We bid farewell to our beloved friend, "in sure and certain hope of the resurrection of the dead," praying earnestly (and O may we remember the prayer during the whole of our future life!) that God "will be pleased to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in Him, as our hope is this our brother doth, and that at the general resurrection in the last day, we may be found acceptable in his sight, and receive that blessing, which his well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all that love and fear Him, saying, 'Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"

<sup>2</sup> John xx. 19. Gospel for the day.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 13.



## SERMON II.

[Preached on Good Friday.]

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### THE VICTORY OF THE CROSS.

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JOHN xvi. 33.

“In the world ye shall have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world.”

It was foretold to the mother of Jesus, in the hour of her thankful rejoicing, that, as a consequence of the birth of the Son whom she was presenting in the Temple, a sword should pierce through her soul<sup>1</sup>, and it is a painful proof of the imperfection of all earthly felicity, that God's best and choicest gifts often prove to us the source of our most poignant sorrow. And this not merely when these gifts, having been abused, are withdrawn from us, leaving behind them the memory of unthankfulness, the bitter thought that they have been to us but the occasion of sin ; but even the purest pleasures

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 35.

which this world affords, sanctified by God's blessing, nay, employed in his service, become the ministers of pain and grief, sharpening the sword that pierces even unto the soul. The names of father and mother, husband and wife, son and daughter, brother and sister, companion and friend, are they not endeared to us by associations most delightful, most elevating, most holy? And yet, which of us all, my brethren, can hear these words pronounced without emotions that recall a time when some one of these words of blessing carried to the bereaved heart an irrepressible sense of desolation? Which of us all will fail to point the words, which have been already spoken, to the sad event of the last few days, to the loss for which all have mourned, and many wept bitterly? For without presuming to penetrate the sanctuary of domestic affliction, in which He only can fully share who bore all our sorrows, we who stand at the threshold can, nay must, shed our bitter tears, and pour forth our heartfelt lamentations. Some among us have known OLIVER WALFORD from boyhood, and have grown up with him in sweet and familiar intercourse (and thus to know him was indeed to value and to love him), some have felt a filial affection grow within them, towards one who united in a most remarkable degree a father's gentleness and love with a master's vigilance and care; while even to those who knew him least the kindly look and friendly voice spoke

sympathy and consideration, assuring them that however rare might be the occasions of direct intercourse, however few the words interchanged, they were not disregarded, but were walking in the house of God as friends.

It is scarcely possible to call to mind the friend whom we have lost without remembering the energy and alacrity with which he pursued duties often very laborious, and the buoyant spirit which lightened his own labours, and cheered those of his associates. And if these qualities seem connected merely with the occupations of this life, let us remember, what he never forgot, that the daily round of duties which present themselves to us in our several stations, are of God's appointment, and according as we perform them are we faithful or unfaithful stewards. Never was there one upon whom a conviction of this truth exerted a more practical influence. Singularly free from that restless ambition or love of change, which wearies of the occupations that are before the feet, and craves what it deems noble employment, or a higher sphere of action, he ever deemed the situation in which he was placed, as one of God's choosing, and therefore that in which he was most happy and content. It was this predominant feeling to which may be ascribed the honesty of purpose for which he was so remarkable. The single-mindedness which St. James teaches us to be the founda-

tion of all stability<sup>2</sup>, made him fearless to assert truth and to reprove vice, while the utter absence of all thought of self gave weight and authority to his advice, and made it honoured even by those who neglected to follow it. His liberal and unselfish spirit was constantly expressing itself not merely in the greater and more direct acts of benevolence, (and who was more generous?) but in the lesser charities of daily life towards all within his reach, and many an act and word of kindness, by him long since forgotten, will be treasured up in the memory of those who received them, as valued tokens of affection from a departed father and friend. It is much to have marked with reverence and love the high and noble qualities of such a man, but it is more, infinitely more, to have observed that these Christian graces grouped themselves in their natural order around Christian principle. Too unpretending to speak much of his own feelings, too frank to utter a word that came not from the heart, too simple to give way to the slightest exaggeration of tone and sentiment, it was impossible to converse with him on any subject without being convinced that the love of God was shed abroad in his heart, that religion was the polestar by which he shaped his own course, and guided that of those committed to his charge; and that in the active and conscientious discharge of his

<sup>2</sup> James i. 8.

duties to God and men, he strove to exhibit in his own person the character he was constantly impressing upon his pupils, the character of a Christian gentleman in its highest and most extended meaning. The font, which remains in this chapel, the gift and memorial of our departed friend, may well impress upon us the truth which he constantly maintained, that "Baptism doth represent unto us our profession; which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him; that as He died, and rose again for us; so should we who are baptized, die unto sin and rise again unto righteousness; continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living."

We have seen him, at how short an interval, apparently in the full vigour of manhood, rejoicing in his youth, but remembering his Creator. To one of his energetic temperament, we can scarcely conceive a greater trial than to be suddenly called upon to relinquish the occupations in which he took so lively pleasure, and to exchange a life of active usefulness for inaction and repose. But God chooses our cross—and was pleased to lay upon him this burden; and it was a beautiful though saddening sight to watch the passive graces of gentleness, patience, and submission, developing themselves more evidently day by day, as he "entered



into the actions of a new religion, the agony of a strange constitution<sup>3</sup>," his buoyant spirits and exuberant gladness gradually subsiding into a sober cheerfulness and holy calm, exactly befitting one, who, having been shot with an arrow from God's quiver, was now called upon to rest from his labour, and to wait patiently upon his God. Exempted from any great amount of painful suffering (though his trial to him may, as I have said, not have been less severe), he preserved his peace and tranquillity to the last, knowing in whom he believed, and was at last released from this world so gently, that when the spirit had fled, his features wore the impress of a placid tranquillity, that seemed to witness to the consolatory assurances with which the voice of Scripture comforts the Christian mourner, "He is not dead but sleepeth."

I should scarcely have trusted myself to attempt this faint tribute to the memory of a beloved and honoured friend, did I not feel that the emotions thus excited were most suitable to this day of mourning, wherein we contemplate our Lord's crucifixion; did I not feel that in the midst of gloom a supernatural light beams from the Cross, lightening the darkness of all who kneel around in sorrow. And surely the affecting and sublime records of our Lord's sufferings, which day by day are set before us,

<sup>3</sup> Taylor's Holy Dying, chap. iv. sect. 1.

were not left simply to awaken the natural feelings that can scarcely fail to accompany their recital: surely they have a higher purpose, to lead the soul, purified and refined by the emotions of pity, from the temporal sorrows of men upon earth, to the eternal joy at God's right hand in heaven. This is the point to which our Good Friday contemplations should ever ascend; and if, at the same time, it be moved by some personal trial, may we not hope that the soul will be strengthened for its upward flight towards those regions where there is no weeping, neither sound of lamentation? With hearts thus chastened and sobered, we shall enter more completely into God's dispensations, and estimate the blessedness of the command which in other, days we only half understood, "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God <sup>4</sup>."

Firstly: thus studied, the Cross will teach us the practical value of the truth, that it is the lot of Christ's disciples to suffer affliction. It was a lesson which our Lord from the very first impressed upon his disciples: "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you <sup>5</sup>." These were parts of the opening address wherein He taught

<sup>4</sup> 2 Tim. i. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. v. 5. 10, 11.

the multitude. Even when defending his disciples for not exhibiting the outward signs of mourning, He said, "The days are coming when the bridegroom shall be taken away; and then shall they mourn<sup>6</sup>." When He sent out his twelve Apostles to preach, He warned them that the disciple was not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord, and pictured to them the trials of future days; adding, in language better understood after his death, "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me<sup>7</sup>." But when his ministry drew more nearly to a close, and Jesus began to prepare his disciples for his sufferings and death, after having severely reprimanded Peter because he deprecated these sufferings, He said again unto his disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me<sup>8</sup>." As the time approached yet nearer, fuller intimations of these coming dispensations were continually made; but it is remarkable that immediately before their consummation there are glimpses of light intermingled with the shadows that gather round—drops of comfort in the cup of bitterness just ready to overflow. In the last discourse of our Lord with his disciples, recorded by St. John, coming sorrow is still the topic upon which He dwells; but it is sorrow viewed

<sup>6</sup> Matt. ix. 15.

<sup>7</sup> Matt. x. 38.

<sup>8</sup> Matt. xvi. 24.



under a different aspect. Before it seemed to be spoken of as a trial, a duty, a dispensation, sad and mysterious; but now the mystery is partly unfolded, the sadness is alleviated if not removed, for it is shown that these afflictions are introductory to the highest possible comfort—that it is over these troublous waters that the Holy Spirit broods in love. The doom of suffering is not reversed, but the heart is not therefore to be troubled or to be afraid; the Saviour's visible presence is to be withdrawn, but the Father “shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever<sup>1</sup>.” Yet were they to remember the word that had been spoken to them, “The servant is not greater than his Lord.” The former predictions of suffering and trial are summed up and reiterated. The approaching grief and desolation of the disciples, the exultation and triumph of the world, are prophetically displayed. But these are no longer to be the cause of sorrow, but of rejoicing: they were not the diminution, but the corroboration of their joy. All was summed up in the triumphant conclusion of my text: “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Thus were the disciples prepared to witness, thus may we be prepared to contemplate, the final sanctification of suffering in the agony of their Lord. We may not yet regard without

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 16.

awful astonishment and holy sorrow the bitter sufferings of the Son of Man, we may not be unmoved at the miraculous concomitants of his Passion, yet may we derive enduring comfort from the thought that by patient suffering we are made conformable to his death, and that in the weakness of the flesh we are strengthened in Christ. The Cross of Christ becomes our glory. The fiery trial is no longer strange. And if for the moment the chastisement will seem grievous, it is lightened by the remembrance that "even hereunto were we called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps<sup>2</sup>."

But, secondly, it is not merely as an example that we are to contemplate our dying Lord. His Passion was not only "most bitter," but also "most victorious." He triumphs from the chariot of the Cross. Let us, in conclusion, briefly consider the nature of his triumphs,—the manner in which He overcame and overcomes the world.

1. He triumphs over sin. If we are to know the true character of sin, we must, as has been often said, go to Calvary, where the fury of the Lord is poured out upon Him who trod the winepress alone,—who looked, and there was none to help,—and with his own arm brought salvation<sup>3</sup>. The cup so bitter, that our Lord prayed that, if it were possible, it might pass

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. lxiii. 3.

from Him ; the desolation so appalling, that He seemed forsaken of his God,—these mark in the blackest colours that which called for a penalty so tremendous. But no sooner is the magnitude of the debt made clear, than it is all paid—the warfare is accomplished ; “ for in that he died, he died unto sin once : but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God<sup>4</sup>.” And shall we, my brethren, who behold the glorious consummation of so sad a conflict, shall we learn nothing of the conflict within ourselves, the conflict of the law of the members with the better mind ? Shall we who have mourned over the Crucifixion go forth, and by wilful sin “ crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame<sup>5</sup> ? ” Now, when our hearts are sad, we may smite upon our breasts, but shall we return to our old occupations and to our old sins, effacing the memory of the past by the enjoyment of the present hour ? Then have we no part in the triumph which our Lord has achieved ; rather we must tremble at his victories, for we have enrolled ourselves under the banner of his enemy.

But if we are resolved to fight against foes without, and unfaithfulness within, then is the Cross the sign of victory. *Ἐν τούτῳ νίκα*. Conquer in this. The storm of passions cannot be so violent, that the Cross will fail to allay it.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. vi. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. vi. 6.

The tempest cannot rage around us so furiously, that the waves will not listen to his command. Our enemies cannot be so numerous, that the Lord of Hosts shall fail to drive them away. Only those who surrender without a struggle, or pass over to the adversary's camp, need fear the issue. The battle is won ; they who have suffered with the great Captain of their salvation shall also rejoice with Him, and "give thanks unto him, who giveth them the victory through Christ Jesus our Lord<sup>6</sup>."

2. Christ has overcome sorrow. The death, indeed, of their Master seemed to the disciples to be but an occasion of fresh grief. But it was not long before the Magdalen was greeted by the voice of our Lord, "Woman, why weepest thou?" I have already pointed out that He overcame sorrow, not by abolishing, but by sanctifying it. It is not that the world has ceased to be the abode of trial and of pain, but that the good issues of pain and trial are made known, so that they who go through the vale of misery may use it as a well, and may find refreshing "water springs in a dry ground<sup>8</sup>." It is not that natural tears will cease to flow in times of visitation, but that in such times the parching heat of the fiery furnace of affliction will be allayed and averted by the presence of the Son of God. How dear in the season of

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 57.

<sup>7</sup> John xx. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Ps. cvii. 33.

affliction are the words which speak peace unto the mourners by referring them to the Cross of Christ, displaying mercy 'even in the severest chastisements; "for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do<sup>9</sup>."

3. Finally, Christ's conquest of sorrow is perfected in his victory over death. It is in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to everlasting life that the dying believer can bid a calm farewell to those whom he holds dear upon earth; it is in that hope that the mourners can with a subdued sorrow commit to the ground the body, which is sown in weakness, but shall be raised in power. "Death in life"—such was the penalty of Adam's sin. Life in death—such the reward of Christ's obedience. Such the fulfilment of the glorious prophecy, "I will ransom thee from the power of the grave; I will redeem thee from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction<sup>1</sup>."

God grant that the event of this week may not pass away, I will not say unheeded (for that were impossible), but unremembered by any one amongst us. May his Spirit impress deeply

<sup>9</sup> 1 Thess. v. 9—11.

<sup>1</sup> Hos. xiii. 14.



and lastingly upon every heart the solemn lesson, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment<sup>2</sup>," that so we may learn the blessed uses of tribulation, and be ready to take up our cross daily, and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. So shall the Cross of Christ be our comfort, our support, and our glory, as we pass through the scenes of this troublous life. So shall the Cross be our stay in that dread hour, when "the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens rolled together as a scroll<sup>3</sup>;" but in the midst of the wrack of elements, and the tumultuous agony of an expiring world, "shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory<sup>4</sup>."

<sup>2</sup> Heb. ix. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. xxxiv. 4.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 54.

THE END.









